

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: November 15, 2023
 SUBJECT: The New Bluffton Worship: Christmas Eve Under the Stars
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget & Procurement Analyst

Summarized below is the application from The New Bluffton Worship for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of advertising and promotion, security and facilities costs for the 2023 Christmas Eve Under the Stars event.

Total Budget: \$29,830

Requested Amount: \$23,110

Percentage of Request^: 77.5%

^Includes up to 100% for Advertising & Promotion plus up to 50% of remaining expenses

Eligible Tourism-Related Expense Categories (per SC Code of Laws)	Total Budget for Category		Requested ATAX Funds
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$16,390		\$16,390
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	11,700		5,280
Public Facilities	-		-
Municipality and County Services	1,440	*	1,440
Tourist Transportation	-	*	-
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	300		-
Total	\$29,830		\$23,110

*Reimbursement will be based on the estimated percentage of tourists provided for

Budgeted Eligible Expenses:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total Budget: \$16,390

- Banners hung around the community, postcards sent to surrounding areas, social media, signage, volunteer apparel, take away gifts and additional unidentified advertising opportunities.

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total Budget: \$11,700

- Rental of stage and sound, tent over stage, and chairs

Municipality & County Services*:

Total Budget \$1,440

- Security provided by Bluffton Police Department

Project Expenses:

Total Budget: \$300

- Candles and holders used during "Silent Night" at the event.

Table Rating (Scores 0-5 with 5 satisfying the qualifications best, exception Advertising 0-15)

Amount Recommend	Advertising (15)	Festival/ Event (5)	Bluffton Event (5)	Tourism Draw % (5)	Benefit to Tourism (5)	Self-Sufficiency % (5)	Total of 40 possible	Comments
\$15,280	8	4	3	2	2	3	22	

Advertising: Approximately 71% of requested funds will be spent on advertising/marketing, which will include banners and signage, postcard mailers, social media posts, and apparel and take away gifts that include the Bluffton Heart of the Lowcountry logo.

Festival/Event: To be held on the evening of December 24, 2023

Bluffton Event: This year's location is Oyster Factory Park

Tourism Draw %: This is a first-time event and tourism statistics have not been gathered in the past.

Benefit to Tourism: Folks from Jasper, Hampton, and Colleton Counties have historically attended. The event is also livestreamed to promote Bluffton and generate interest in and travel to the community.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is around 77% of the total budget, with approximately 71% going towards marketing and promotion. In-kind services of volunteer hours as well as donated goods also contribute to the event.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
N/A						

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends funding \$15,280 for advertising and facilities for civic or cultural events.